

# NPL Site Narrative for American Lake Gardens/McChord AFB

## AMERICAN LAKE GARDENS/MCCHORD AFB Tacoma, Washington

**Conditions at listing (September 1983):** In January 1983, a resident of American Lake Gardens in Tacoma, Washington, complained to EPA about family health problems, which she blamed on bad drinking water. She claimed that contamination resulting from disposal practices at McChord Air Force Base, which borders her property on three sides, was polluting her wells. EPA and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department found high levels of iron, trichloroethylene, and 1,2-transdichloroethylene in her wells. Subsequent sampling identified several more contaminated wells nearby. In all, 20 of the 57 wells in American Lake Gardens were tested. The Health Department advised owners of several wells serving about 25 people to use bottled water.

Because of the discovery of this well contamination, plus the contamination of two large public wells adjacent to another part of McChord, the Air Force accelerated its Installation Restoration Program at the base. As part of this effort, the Air Force has sampled existing wells on-site, drilled a number of monitoring wells, and reviewed records of disposal practices and spills on the base. However, the information covering the area adjacent to American Lake Gardens is incomplete. EPA is now drilling four monitoring wells along the boundary of the most contaminated property and will drill up to six additional wells to determine the extent of contamination and to locate the source. The Air Force has agreed to drill at least two monitoring wells on the base to help locate the source and to continue its general investigation of ground water contamination.

**Status (June 1984):** EPA drilled and sampled eight monitoring wells in American Lake Gardens and sampled three monitoring wells constructed by the Air Force on adjacent property. The lab results showed contamination of the American Lake Gardens wells to be coming from McChord Air Force Base. Accordingly, on March 1, 1984, EPA turned the site investigation over to the Air Force. The Air Force has agreed to perform a remedial investigation/feasibility study to determine the type and extent of contamination at the site and identify alternatives for remedial action. The Air Force is now providing bottled water to American Lake Gardens' residents dependent on contaminated wells. In addition, the Air Force recently sampled approximately 20 wells in the subdivision and constructed several additional monitoring wells on the McChord Air Force Base.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.